

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### Golden-winged warbler

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Spring is upon us, and with it comes the annual northward migration of neo-tropical migratory birds returning from their Central and South American wintering grounds. One of those returning bird species is the golden-winged warbler, a tiny bird weighing in a little heavier than 3 pennies.

The Endangered Species Act allows anyone to ask, or petition, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to place a plant or animal on the federal endangered species list, and the Service has been asked to place the golden-winged warbler on the list.

Golden-wing warblers breed in two broad areas in North America – a northern area from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan into Canada; and an eastern area which includes the Southern Appalachians and areas north, tapering off into New England. The golden-winged warbler makes its nest low to the ground, in what biologists call early-successional habitat, that is areas with a lot of new and low growth typical of what you would find in a field before trees have an opportunity to become dominant.

The Fish & Wildlife Service has yet to rule whether or not the warbler should be on the endangered species list, but the bird's preference for open areas brings to light the question of what role early successional habitat plays in the Southern Appalachian landscape.

For WCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.